

# Kyodan

## News Letter

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...hello...my name is Tony Carter...I saw in the newspaper that you are translating materials on pollution into English...I am calling to see if I can be of any help in translating or proof-reading....

...thanks....maybe you can help us.... at any rate I'd like to talk to you sometime about what we are doing....

In a coffee shop in Tokyo one evening in mid-March, Tony Carter and Jun Ui "we" met for the first time. Carter, 38, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ in the United States and a missionary of the Kyodan. Ui, 40, is a research fellow at Tokyo University and the central figure in the Jishu Koza, an open forum on the basic problems and principles of pollution. Both share the concern for the threats to human life and dignity that hover in the smog over the skies of Tokyo and Yokkaichi, course through the waters of Minamata Bay and the Tamagawa River, lurk in the soil in northern Kyushu-- silently and secretly taking their toll in human life and threatening the future of man's existence on earth.

For Japan, along with becoming one of the world's most advanced countries industrially and technologically, has become the "world's most heavily polluted country". In no other country are found so many different kinds of pollution. Most prominent among Japan's environmental problems are:

Minamata Disease--caused by mercury, alleged to have been discharged into the Minamata Bay by a chemical plant....affecting speech, sight, hearing, sense of balance, muscles and bone.

Itai-itai (Ouch-ouch) Disease--caused by cadmium from mine waters drained into rice paddy....affecting nerves and motor control.

Kanemi Rice Oil Disease--caused by PCB, a toxicant in the heat transfer process for oil, plastics, etc....resulting in skin eruptions, internal pain, damage to eyes and lungs.

The project that brought Carter and Ui together was publication of the booklet, Polluted Japan, for the series of international environmental meetings just completed in Stockholm. The Japanese government was sending five representatives to Stockholm for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and also prepared a report on the government's intended countermeasures to pollution. But Jishu Koza members felt the report failed to show the very serious effects of pollution on life, health and property.

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Believing that "Japan's experience with mercury, cadmium and PCB is convincing enough to caution the rest of the world against what is happening in Japan", Koza members undertook production in English of the research reports of its members. Jun Ui calls the 78-page illustrated book on 20 major pollution problems "a message to the world from the Japanese people." In addition to sending 2500 copies of the booklet to Sweden, the Jishu Koza raised money to send a group of 16 persons composed of pollution victims, researchers, doctors and documentary movie producers. Jun Ui headed the group; Tony Carter was invited to accompany them as interpreter. Many citizens' groups, like the Koza, met in lively forums around the edge of the Stockholm Conference.

It was while doing research on sewage disposal problems that Ui became aware of the deeper problem of water pollution. He had intended to get his PhD and become a professor at Tokyo University. But when, in the course of his research, he talked with Minamata and Itai-itai victims, he decided rather to make their struggle his own.



To mobilize citizen consciousness, he organized the Jishu Koza open forum, which meets every Monday night at Tokyo University. Attendance averages 200 but has reached 1,000. Forum lectures and statistical data are immediately transcribed and published, largely through the efforts of student, salaryman and housewife volunteers. Ui also makes his laboratory available to others conducting pollution research.



Carter, who came to Japan in 1964, began to focus his ministry on environmental problems while studying urban growth at University of Wisconsin during his furlough in 1969-1970.

"I found that the Milwaukee River looked fine--until you sat by it, or drank it, or measured it," he says. Returning to Japan, he found the same and even greater evidences of pollution in the "beautiful Minamata Bay" and Tokyo's Tamagawa River, frothy with discharged detergents. An expert photographer, Carter makes use of a range of media techniques to arouse others to more active efforts to preserve human life.

In the chapter, "An Overview of Pollution in Japan" in Polluted Japan, Ui attributes the critical condition of pollution in Japan to four factors:

- a) the rapid development of the economy, at the expense of accompanying measures to handle pollution problems;
- b) a close symbiotic relationship between political power and industry;
- c) a very weak concept of basic human rights;
- d) the degenerate use of science and technology (to defend rather than resolve problems affecting human life)

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Artists produced the above poster.

"The only hope for escaping from this desperate situation in Japan lies," he writes, "in the history and future of the anti-pollution movement based on citizens' and pollution victims' response to the problem." There are more than 1,000 such movements in Japan--"large and small, weak and strong." Although their situations and theories differ greatly, they have as a common goal "a more humane system."

Carter feels there is considerable criticism of Christianity from environmentalists in the Orient because of the interpretation of Genesis as sanctioning man's "dominion" over nature. Christianity is also criticized as providing part of the momentum behind industrialization. Carter adds that the recent theological emphasis on "secularism" has tended to reduce respect for nature in favor of an emphasis on man's freedom to do as he pleases.

"For me," Carter says, "what the Gospel is all about is Jesus's caring for the wretched and the maimed, his working so that all might enjoy life...."

July Shinto no Tomo carries the story of a "Modern Job" whose family was attacked by swellings that covered their bodies and made them writhe in pain. The cause unknown, people withdrew in fear. But others fell victim, too. The cause proved to be not a communicable disease but PCB contamination in cooking oil made and sold in the area.

Ryozo Kamino, the "Modern Job," was an earnest, long-time member of the Lutheran Church in Nogata City. He had intended to devote his retirement to orchid-raising. Then the Kanemi Rice Oil disaster befell him, his wife, his two daughters, and the husband of the elder daughter. Kamino's response was to begin a campaign on behalf of the sufferers, but not one steeped in hatred or "How much can we get in compensation?"

For Kamino, the essence of the problem is preventing pollution. "As long as man's greed makes him indifferent to others, the problem will never be eradicated," he says. "Human greed is responsible for the sin of pollution. If the sufferers themselves campaign out of hatred and selfishness, they will be no different from the enterprises that cause the pollution, and this will never bring about a solution. Enterprises that pollute the environment should be closed down not out of hatred but to put an end to greed and selfishness. It is now my privilege to be summoned to carry on in the campaign against pollution from this position."

Copies of Polluted Japan are available for ¥600(\$2.00) from Jishu Koza Citizens' Committee, 1-14-8 Maruyama Bldg., Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo.

breakthrough, no. 35, march-april 1972 is devoted to "The Ecological Challenge" and "The Present State of PCB Contamination in Japan." Available from breakthrough, 8-15 Takaminecho, Kokura ku, Kitakyushu 803, Japan.

VOICES OF EXPECTANCY...with overtones of impatience...are being heard in the district assemblies that have met across Japan this spring. Evidences of new energy have been reported in most of the 13 district assemblies held thus far. However, of the four districts that have not been able to hold annual assemblies since 1969, only one--Kyoto--has met this spring, and it did not get around to the business of electing General Assembly delegates although it will attempt to convene again this summer.

Four years ago the Kyodan underwent a major restructuring. It was a deliberate attempt to shift responsibility for program initiative to the district and local level from the national level. Last year many districts were not able to take up the baton, but this year, districts show that they are grappling with their particular situations and considering steps to be taken.

The two most crucial issues in most assemblies were ordination and the election of General Assembly delegates. The standards for testing and the basis upon which ordination is conferred have been questioned and as yet no Kyodan-wide conclusion reached. But, although in most districts there was considerable discussion of the issues, only one district--Nishi-Chugoku--voted not to ordain, at this time, the men who have passed the ordination examination.

In the case of General Assembly delegates, events of the past several years have caused district assemblies to take the elections more seriously than heretofore, and nominees are sometimes asked to state the platform on which they stand before the election is conducted.

Kyodan General Secretary Toru Takakura, who has attended many of the district assemblies, noted that the parliamentary system is slowly being remolded to allow more expression of grass roots opinion. In recent years, mondai teikisha (literally, problem posers--meaning those posing problems) have stormed into annual district

and executive committee meetings, disrupting parliamentary proceedings and pressing their claims that the whole system has become an empty sham because unthinking persons were being elected as delegates.

Delegates are now coming to district meetings better prepared for the issues to be discussed, and sessions are sometimes divided into sub-groups for closer study.

The new muscle at the district level is also making itself felt in the national structure, as district moderators take part in the Executive and Standing Executive Committee meetings, under a new plan initiated last fall.

Takakura, with an audible sigh and a wry smile, concluded his observations on the general outlook of the assemblies with the comment, "In the long run, the terrible struggle we have been going through may prove to be the best thing that has happened to us...."

ONE MORE NOTE sounded in many assemblies is captured in the words of Rev. Hiroshi Omiya, moderator of Kanto district, who, in the closing service of worship, said

The question put to us is the same one that the Risen Lord put to Peter:

Do you love me? If you do, feed my sheep.

The question for us is

Are we feeding the sheep?

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MEANWHILE, the General Assembly Preparations Committee chaired by Rev. Kikaku Shimamura continues to work on plans for convening the postponed 17th General Assembly, hopefully in October of this year.

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#### CHURCH KINDERGARTENS FACE DILEMMA

The future of the church-related kindergarten, in view of the government's plan to include kindergartens in its 10-year expansion of educational opportunities, was the chief concern when 125 heads of Kyodan-related kindergartens met May 30 - June 1 at Karuizawa in a meeting sponsored by the Kyodan Education Committee.

The new proposal is made in the Report on the Reform of the Japanese Educational System drawn up by the Central Education Council established by the Ministry of Education. The Council has been studying the Japanese education system for the past several years. It submitted its report to the Ministry of Education last June. The report advises reforming the school system established after the war to meet the needs growing out of the tremendous social and economic changes. The report emphasizes education appropriate to the ability and aptitude of the child.

Along this line, the Ministry of Education has a ten-year plan to expand kindergarten education. It involves an attempt to amend the law regulating kindergartens so that kindergartens of religious organizations (shukyo hojin) can receive aid from national or local governments, as kindergartens classified as educational juridical persons (gakko hojin). However, to thus qualify the kindergarten registered as shukyo hojin will have to become a gakko hojin-established separately and registered accordingly with the Ministry of Education. Property must also be registered separately.

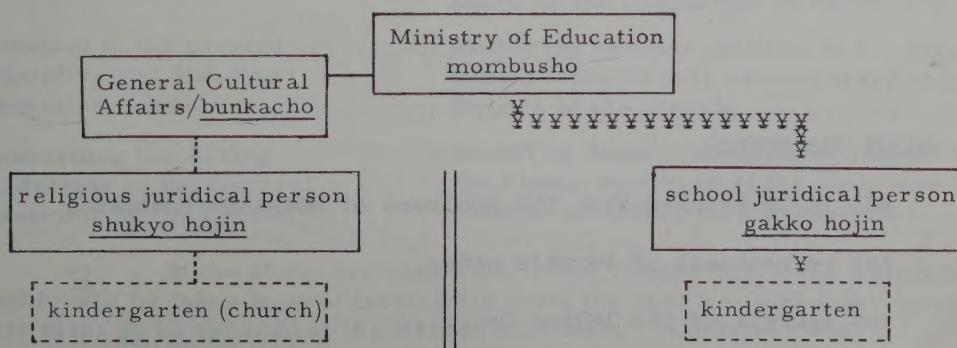
The alternative poses a dilemma for all shukyo hojin kindergartens, particularly those of religious bodies. Four hundred seventy-five Kyodan kindergartens are registered under shukyo hojin.

Said one young minister who favors the kindergartens' being gakko hojin, "To assume the status of a gakko hojin does not necessarily mean that we become subservient or fawning to the authority of the government." The kindergarten is a function of the church as well as something conducted for society as a whole," he said, "and the kindergarten that has the status of a school is authorized to carry on its work without needless interference." This pastor is from Fukui-ken, where most church kindergartens are gakko hojin, having been set up as such after the war by churches with historic Canadian relationships.

A young pastor from Hokkaido vehemently opposed the latter position saying that the church is authorized, under the laws of the shukyo hojin, to conduct education. "From the standpoint of the church's mission, it is overly optimistic to think that you can get aid from the local government and be free from its control over education."

The majority of the participants seemed to favor retaining the present status. Yet they feel a need to have a way to receive local government aid without violating the Constitution, which prohibits interference or favor on the part of the state toward religion. Full evaluation of the issue will come when the proposed amendment to laws governing schools is taken up in the Diet.

The National Church Kindergarten Association was organized with 94 charter members. Its aim is to increase relationships between all Kyodan kindergartens and promote Christian education through shukyo hojin kindergartens.



what has been -- I N T H E K Y O D A N -- what is to be

## I. Coming Events

Pioneer Evangelism Conference to be held 8/28-30 in Hakone with "History and the Formation of the Church - The Faith and Will of the Evangelist" as the theme

Laymen's Seminar to be held at Tozanso 8/28-30 under theme of "Obedience to Christ"

AVACO conducts Annual Summer Workshop 7/26-29 offering theological lectures as well as techniques

Kyodan Hymnal Comm. sponsors annual summer music workshop 8/21-25 in Kobe with instruction in range of church music subjects  
(Shimpo 6/24)

## II. Recent Events

### Districts

District Assembly news: Chubu, Ou, Shikoku (Shimpo 6/3), Kanagawa (Shimpo 6/10, 6/24), Okinawa (Shimpo 6/17), Kyoto (Shimpo 6/24)  
(News Letter 6/20)

### Education

Kyodan kindergarten heads form national association in light of problems raised by new Ministry of Education plan affecting kindergarten education (Shimpo 6/24, News Letter 6/20)

### Kyodan

Standing Executive Comm. holds 42th session 6/12-13 (Shimpo 6/24)

### Social

Shirawa Megumigakuen home for mentally retarded children opened on May 5, Children's Day, project of pastors' group (Shimpo 6/17)  
Series on Okinawa reversion problems (Shimpo 6/3, 10, 17, 24)  
Both Yasukuni nationalization and immigration bills are dropped as Diet session ends with no action taken on them (Shimpo 6/24)  
see also Youth

### Women

Study book of program suggestions for districts is mailed 6/12

### Youth

Hyogo district organizes new kind of Community Center program for youth focusing on modern social problems in new building on site of former Kobe Student Center (Shimpo 6/10)

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE NEWS LETTER WILL BE SEPTEMBER 20

ENJOY THE SUMMER

may it be touched with the coolness of Hokkaido breezes,

the refreshment of Asama's peaks,

the sparkle of the Inland Sea....

and don't forget to fight against pollution